

## WASHINGTON NATIONAL MONUMENT SOCIETY.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 769.]

MAY 24, 1860.

Mr. HUGHES, from a minority of the Committee on the District of Columbia, submitted the following

### MINORITY REPORT.

*The Committee on the District of Columbia, to whom was referred the memorial of the Washington National Monument Society, ask leave to report:*

The memorial states that in the year 1833 they and their predecessors united themselves into a society for the purpose of erecting "a great national monument to the memory of Washington, at the seat of the federal government;" that during the interval between that year and the year 1848 they had, by means of private contributions from their fellow-citizens throughout the Union, which at convenient times were profitably invested, accumulated a fund deemed sufficient to justify them in commencing to build the monument; that the corner-stone of it was, on the 4th of July, 1848, laid on a site granted for that purpose under the authority of Congress; that the work was prosecuted for six years by means of similar contributions, until one-third of the shaft of the proposed monument was erected; that then the memorialists, having exhausted the means placed at their disposal by the patriotism of individuals, submitted a succinct statement of the history of the enterprise to the consideration of Congress, for such action "as to the assembled wisdom and patriotism of the nation might seem meet;" that their memorial on that occasion was referred by the House of Representatives to a select committee, consisting of thirteen members; that this select committee, after a careful and minute examination of the whole subject, made a report on the 22d of February, 1855, in which the proceedings of the society were reviewed, its conduct was approved, and a subscription by Congress of \$200,000 in aid of the monument was recommended; that no further action in relation to the monument was had in Congress until February, 1859, when the memorialists received from Congress a charter of incorporation; that they had since taken such preliminary steps as seemed conducive to the completion of the monument, but had not obtained funds more than enough for the conservation of the work already done; and that under these circumstances they felt it to be their duty again to submit the subject to the consideration of Congress.

The report of the select committee, of February 22, 1855, (H. R. Rep. No. 94, 33d Cong., 2d sess.,) presents a succinct but sufficiently detailed statement of the proceedings of the society which originated this great work, and which is now acting under a charter of incorporation. That committee, after examining the books, papers, accounts, and officers of the society, bears unanimous and emphatic testimony to the disinterestedness and fidelity of their services; states that at the date of the report the shaft had reached the height of 170 feet, and that the sum of \$230,000 had been expended on the work; that it is intended to raise the shaft to the height of 517 feet; and that the work was estimated to cost, when completed, \$1,122,000. The select committee recommend that Congress should subscribe, on behalf of the people of the United States, the sum of \$200,000, to aid the society in completing the work. This is the amount which, on the 4th of January, 1801, the House of Representatives passed a bill to appropriate for erecting a mausoleum "for George Washington in the city of Washington."

Your committee find no reason for dissenting from the views unanimously taken by the select committee in the report already cited. We cannot but regard the proceedings adopted by Congress shortly after the death of Washington as pledging the public faith to the erection of a suitable monument to his memory. It cannot be doubted that the pledge was given in full consonance with the feelings and wishes of the whole country. Whatever may be said to excuse or explain the delay which has been suffered in redeeming the pledge, the contributions of nearly a quarter of a million of dollars which individual citizens have already made towards erecting a monument to the father of his country abundantly shows that its completion is an object dear to the hearts of the people. They cannot understand why the universal custom of free States in all ages of the world, to commemorate by monumental representations deeds of patriotism and glory, has so long been disregarded in the instance of the noblest of all national benefactors.

Your committee recommend that the sum of \$200,000 be appropriated by Congress, on behalf of the people of the United States, to aid the memorialists in completing the monument to Washington now in the process of erection at the seat of the federal government. But they are of opinion that this amount ought to be disbursed in annual sums of \$20,000 for each fiscal year; that each annual instalment be paid to the treasurer of the society, on a joint warrant, to be signed by the chairmen of the committees of the two Houses of Congress for the District of Columbia; and that the accounts of disbursements be settled at the treasury in the usual mode of auditing the accounts of disbursing agents. We report herewith a bill accordingly.